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ABSTRACT

Eco-Inquiry may be defined as a "whole science" curriculum that embeds hands-on science within thematic multi-dimensional learning experiences. Three modules for the upper elementary and middle grades focus on food webs, decomposition, and nutrient cycling. Each module lasts 4-7 weeks and may be used alone or in sequence. Student research teams plan and carry out investigations, complete peer reviews, and share ideas and findings. In the first module on food webs, students survey a plot of land such as a schoolyard or local park. They then devise a food web of animals' feeding habits in their study site and trace how one change in the site could affect the entire food web. In the second module on decomposition, students explore decomposition outdoors and in the classroom to become familiar with microbes then research the best conditions for making plants decompose in a classroom decomposition chamber. Finally in the third module on nutrient cycling, students do research to test the effects of compost tea on radish growth. They also explore plant and soil nutrient connections in the schoolyard. (AIM)

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